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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to measure intrafamily conflict and violence, the author introduces the Conflict Resolution Technique Scales (CRT). In practice, the way people deal with conflict is so much part of the unrealized, "taken for granted" ongoing pattern of life that much will be missed unless the respondent is specifically asked. In the case of the CRT scales, the choice of conflict modalities was based on the fact that the following three modes of dealing with conflict are particularly important for testing the "catharsis theory" of violence control: (1) the use of rational discussion, argument, and reasoning; (2) the use of verbal and non-verbal expressions of hostility, insults, threats; and (3) the use of physical force or violence as a means of resolving the conflict. It is hoped that the availability of the CRT will encourage empirical research on one of the most central, yet neglected, aspects of the family. (Author)

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MEASURING INTRAFAMILY CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE: THE CRT SCALES */

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Conflict theorists present a convincing case showing that conflict is an inevitable part of all human association (Adams, 1965; Coser, 1956; Dahrendorf, 1959; Scanzoni, 1972; Simmel, 1908; Sprey, 1969). They further hold that without the changes brought about by conflict, a social unit--be it a nation, an academic department, or a family--runs a high risk of collapse, If conflict is suppressed, it can result in stagnation and failure to adapt to changed circumstances and/or erode the bond of group solidarity because of an accumulation of hostility.

Despite the above, most people fear conflict and try to avoid it. Professionals concerned with the family also tend to take an almost opposite view to that of conflict theorists. They treat conflict as something to be avoided. Sociologists and psychologists do research to find out why conflict occurs, implicitly to be able to provide information which will enable people to avoid conflict. Marriage counselors, with a few exceptions such as Bach and Wyden (1968) and Shostrom and Kavanaugh (1971), focus much of their efforts on helping families avoid conflicts.

There are a number of reasons for this hiatus between the truths revealed to us by sociological conflict theorists and the truths revealed by our daily experience and emotional reactions to conflict. Among these are such factors as the need to defend one's position in the power structure of a group, social myths to maintain the status quo, reactions to painful past experience, and the confusion of the undesirable situation itself with the conflict over how the situation is to be dealt with. However,

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since this paper is concerned with methods of measuring conflict rather than with the important theoretical questions raised by this hiatus, the available space permits only a discussion of one of the factors. This is the conceptual confusion which characterizes our thinking about such things as conflict and violence. More specifically, it is essential to distinguish between a series of closely related yet clearly different phenomena, all of which are called conflict. For purposes of this paper, even this list must be confined to only three of these: "conflict of interest," "conflict," and "hostility" (further conceptual distinctions are discussed in Gelles and Straus, 1977).

Conflict of Interest. When conflict theorists talk about the ubiquity of conflict, they are referring to what is here called "conflict of interest;" that is, to the fact that members of a social group, no matter how small and intimate, are each seeking to live out their lives in accordance with a personal agenda which inevitably differ. These differences range in importance. Who's TV show will be watched at 8? Should money be saved or spent on a vacation? Which is more important to control: inflation or unemployment? There is no way to avoid such conflicts without running the risks to which conflict theorists have alerted us. However, there is a tendency among those writing from a conflict theory perspective to imply that the more conflict the better, or at least to not discuss the question of how much conflict is necessary or desirable.

The question of how much conflict is desirable is also beyond the scope of a methodological paper such as this, But I would like to suggest that it is an important question for empirical research, and to further suggest the hypothesis that there is a curvilinear relation between the amount of conflict

and group well being. That is, the absence of conflict in the sense of conflict of interest is theoretically impossible and, even if it could be brought about, would be fatal for group well being. But at the same time, very high levels of conflict can create such a high level of stress and/or such rapid change that group welfare is adversely affected.

Conflict. The second phenomenon which must be distinguished if we are to have any hope of doing sound theoretical or empirical research on intrafamily conflict is the method used to advance one's interest; that is, the means by which, or the behavior used to resolve conflict. Two families can have the same level of conflict over the types of interests mentioned in the previous section. But even though conflict in that sense is identical, the two may differ vastly--and with profound consequences--in respect to how they deal with these conflicts. One family might resolve the issue of which TV program by rotation, another by a "first there" strategy, and another by who is physically strongest or most willing to threaten force.

Some conflict theorists have attempted to deal with the conceptual confusion by using the term "conflict" to refer to conflict of interest, and a different term to refer to conflict in the sense of the means of advancing one's interest. Thus, Dahrendorf (1959) refers to the means of engaging in conflict as "conflict management." However, the situation remains confused because other theorists follow the opposite strategy. Coser (1956) uses "conflict" to refer to the behavior used to pursue one's interest. So, when Coser and Dahrendor use the term conflict, they are often referring to quite different phenomena, the one to the conflict of interest and the other to the means of pursuing those interests. There is no resolution in sight for this confusing state of affairs. The best that can be done is to make clear what usage one is following. Therefore,

in the context of the present paper, Coser's usage will be followed, i.e., "conflict" will be used to refer to the overt acts which people carry out in response to a conflict of interest.

Hostility. When, for whatever reason, members of a group have a feeling or dislike or antipathy for each other, this fact is also often referred to as conflict. But paradoxically, as conflict theorists have pointed out, hostility is likely to be extremely high when conflict in the sense of conflict of interest is repressed. This is because such a situation, namely the existence of conflict of interests and the repression of conflict in the sense of attempts to do something about those conflicts of interest, means that the actors are prevented from achieving ends which are important for them. Hostility develops out of this frustration. Of course, hostility can arise from other sources as well. But that only highlights the need to keep distinct the phenomena of conflict of interest, conflict, and hostility. Therefore, in this paper, hostility will be restricted to refer to the level of negative cathexis between members of the family group.

MEASURING THE THREE ASPECTS OF CONFLICT

It follows from the previous discussion that further theoretical work on conflict in the family requires as a minimum first step that we avoid the all too common confusion of "conflict of interest," "conflict," and "hostility." Similarly, clear empirical work on intrafamily conflict also depends on having separate measures of these three variables. The bulk of this paper will therefore be devoted to describing a technique for measuring intrafamily conflict in the sense of the means used to resolve conflicts of interest.

Measures of hostility and conflict of interest are also being developed. These are not presented in this paper because, in addition to space limitations:

(1) Some measures for these variables are available in the form of family problem check lists, measures of family disagreement, and measures of parent-child and husband-wife affection and supportiveness. For the most part these are not focused sharply enough on the distinct aspects of conflict specified in the introduction to this paper, but at least some can be used for that purpose. When we consider "conflict" in the specific sense of the means of resolving conflicts of interest, however, there are almost no measures available. It was, therefore, decided that the first priority in developing adequate instrumentation for research on intrafamily conflict should be on measures of "conflict" per se. (2) Work on developing the measure of conflict has been in progress for some time. Consequently, both the necessary conceptual work as well as results of preliminary empirical studies of the validity and reliability of this instrument are available.

THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUE (CRT) SCALES

There is an almost infinite variety of techniques which members of a family can employ in a conflict. In priciple, only open-ended free response methods can tap all of these. But in practice, the way people deal with conflict is so much part of the unrealized, "taken for granted" ongoing pattern of life that much will be missed unless the respondent is specifically asked. Other omissions occur because certain modes of conflict, such as the use of physical force--although extremely common--tend to be pushed out of memory because they are unacceptable presentations of the self. Consequently, for any but the most lengthy and in-depth interviews carried out by a highly sensitive investigator, structured methods are needed and some choice of conflict resolution techniques must inevitably be made.

In the case of the CRT scales, the choice of conflict modalities was based on the fact that the following three modes of dealing with conflict are particularly important for testing the "catharsis theory" of violence control (Straus, 1974): (1) The use of rational discussion, argument, and reasoning--an intellectual approach to the dispute, which for purposes of this instrument is called "Reasoning."[1/] (2) The use of verbal and non-verbal expressions of hostility, insults, threats--essentially acts which symbolically hurt the other or threats to hurt the other, and which, for purposes of this instrument, is called "Verbal Aggression."[2/] (3) The use of physical force or violence as a means of resolving the conflict, and which is called the "Violence" scale.

As previously noted, these three modalities are a theoretically based, but still arbitrary, selection from a much larger (but as yet undefined) set. Even though Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Violence were chosen with a specific theoretical issue in mind, these three modalities are so important that they are likely to be found useful in a wide range of investigations. But, of course, there will be research issues which require data on other modes on conflict. Even in such cases, the general strategy of measurement outlined in this paper might still be applicable. Another qualification which must be kept in mind concerns the grouping of items making up the scores for each modality. Factor analysis is needed to determine if items do, in fact, fall into these three groups.

Factorial Design. The CRT scales were developed through the use of a model analogous to a 3 by 8 factorial design experiment (Straus, 1964: 350-351). The three levels of the first factor are the modalities of conflict: Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Violence. The eight level factor corresponds

FIGURE 1. CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES FORM AS USED IN STRAUS, 1974 AND BULCROFT AND STRAUS, 1975. HUSBAND FORM.

Here is a list of things you might have done when you had a conflict or disagreement with your wife. We would like you to try and remember what went on during the last year your son or daughter was in high school. Please circle a number for each of the things listed below to show how often you did it that year:

0 =Never
1 =Once that year
2 =Two or three times
3 =Often, but less than once a month
4 =About once a month
5 =More than once a month

A. I tried to discuss the issue relatively calmly 0 1 2 3 4 5

B. Did discuss the issue relatively calmly 0 1 2 3 4 5

C. Got information to back up my side of things 0 1 2 3 4 5

D. Brought in someone else to help settle things (or tried to) 0 1 2 3 4 5

E. Argued heatedly but short of yelling 0 1 2 3 4 5

F. Yelled and/or insulted 0 1 2 3 4 5

G. Sulked and/or refused to talk about it 0 1 2 3 4 5

H. Stomped out of the room 0 1 2 3 4 5

I. Threw something (but not at my wife) or smashed something 0 1 2 3 4 5

J. Threatened to hit or throw something at her 0 1 2 3 4 5

K. Threw something at my wife 0 1 2 3 4 5

L. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved her 0 1 2 3 4 5

M. Hit (or tried to hit) her but not with anything 0 1 2 3 4 5

N. Hit (or tried to hit) her with something hard 0 1 2 3 4 5

to the roles making up the nuclear family: husband-to-wife, wife-to-husband, father-to-child, child-to-father, mother-to-child, child-to-mother, referent child-to-sibling, and sibling-to-referent child. There are therefore a total of 3 X 8 = 24 different CRT scores. In addition, one can combine the pairs of role scores to get four "role-relationship" scores; one each for the conjugal, father-child, mother-child and sibling relationships. Finally, all the role scores cam be summed to obtain total family scores for Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Violence. However, not every investigation will need the full 3 by 8 matrix of questions. For example, a study focusing on the husband-wife relationship would probably only need to obtain data on the husband-to-wife and the wife-to-husband roles.

The Component Items. The CRT consists of a list of actions which a family member might take in relation to a conflict with another member. The items start with those low in coerciveness (such as discussing the issue with the other) and become gradually more coercive and aggressive towards the end of the list (such as slapping and hitting). The response categories ask for the number of times each action occurred during the past year, ranging from "Never" to "More than 20 times."

In the original version of the CRT (Figure 1), items A through D are

Figure 1 about here

summed to obtain the Reasoning score, items E through I the Verbal Aggression score, and items J through O the Violence score.

The CRT items are presented with pairs of response categories, one pair for each family "role-relationship" to be measured. Thus, if the husband-wife relationship is the focus, respondents are asked to indicate how often they did each act in relation to their spouse in the past year, and how often the spouse carried out each action. Similar pairs can be presented for the parent-child and the sibling-sibling roles. Thus, as previously noted, for each of

FIGURE 2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES FORM AS USED IN 1976 NATIONAL SURVEY

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree on major decisions, get annoyed about something the other person does, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I'm going to read a list of some things that you and your (husband/partner) might have done when you had a dispute, and would first like you to tell me for each one how often you did it in the past year.

HAND RESPONDENT CARD A

	Q. 78 RESPONDENT-IN PAST YEAR								Q. 79 HUSBAND/PARTNER-IN PAST YEAR								Q. 80 EVER HAPPENED		
	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE	3-5 TIMES	6-10 TIMES	11-20 TIMES	MORE THAN 20 TIMES	DON'T KNOW	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE	3-5 TIMES	6-10 TIMES	11-20 TIMES	MORE THAN 20 TIMES	DON'T KNOW	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
a. Discussed the issue calmly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
b. Got information to back up (your/his) side of things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
c. Brought in or tried to bring in someone to help settle things	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
d. Insulted or swore at the other one	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
e. Sulked and/or refused to talk about it	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
f. Stomped out of the room or house (or yard)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
g. Cried	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
h. Did or said something to spite the other one	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
i. Threatened to hit or throw something at the other one	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
j. Threw or smashed or hit or kicked something	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
k. Threw something at the other one	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
l. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved the other one	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
m. Slapped the other one	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
n. Kicked, bit, or hit with a fist	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
o. Hit or tried to hit with something	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
p. Beat up the other one	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
q. Threatened with a knife or gun	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
r. Used a knife or gun	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X
s. Other (PROBE):_____	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X	1	2	X

79. And what about your (husband/partner)? Tell me how often he (ITEM) in the past year.

FOR EACH ITEM CIRCLED EITHER "NEVER" OR "DON'T KNOW" FOR BOTH RESPONDENT AND PARTNER, ASK:

80. Did you or your (husband/partner) ever (ITEM)?

the three modalities of conflict resolution, there can be at least seven individual role or actor scores: husband, wife, father, mother, child A (or all children), sibling A, and Sibling B. The scores for the two partners in a role relationship can be combined into three role scores: spousal, parent-child, and sibling.

A revised version of the CRT was developed for a national interview survey.[3] The page measuring conflict in the conjugal role is shown in Figure 2. This version is for use in a face to face interview rather

Figure 1 about here

than a self-administered questionnaire, and there is a greater focus on the Verbal Aggression and Violence modalities. The changes consist of (1) Dropping one Reasoning item and adding two Verbal Aggression and three Violence items. (2) Increasing the response category range from 0 to 5 to 0 to 6, and presenting them as a "response card." (3) Changes in some items. (4) Adding a place to record if the action "ever" happened.

Scoring. There are several methods of scoring the CRT. The simplest is to add the response category code values for the items making up each CRT scale. Thus, the Reasoning score (for the version of the CRT shown in Figure 1) consists of the sum of items a, b, and c. It therefore has a range of 0 to 18. Alternatively, the items can be weighted in accordance with the frequencies indicated by the response categories presented to the respondent. To do this, substitute for the 0 to 6 scale, 0, 1, 2, 4, 8, 15, and 25. A final variation is to standardize each of the scales on a 0 to 100 scale indicating the percentage of the possible total score. This is done by simply dividing the score for each respondent by the maximum possible score, multiplying by 100 and rounding to an integer. Thus, for the Reasoning

scale, a respondent with a raw score (by method 1) of 9 would have a percentage score of 50, and a respondent with a raw score of 12 would have a percentage score of 67. The advantage of the percentage standardization is that it expresses all scales in the same units and uses units that have meaning to the general public: percentage of the maximum possible score (see Straus and Kumagai, 1976). However, there is no statistical advantage. 4/

The scores for Verbal Aggression and Violence are obtained in a similar way. For Verbal Aggression, add items d, e, f, h, i, and j. Note that item g is omitted. This was included in the list of actions because pre-test interviewing showed it to be a frequent response and that respondents became uneasy if there was no place to record this.

The Violence score consists of the sum of items k through r. The list of violenct acts is longer than the list for the other two modalities in this version of the CRT for two reason. First items q and r were included even though they are relatively rare occurances because it was felt inclusion of these two acts of extreme violence might make respondents more willing to describe the less extreme acts on the list. The second reason for the longer list of acts of physical violence is that the study for which this version of the CRT was developed had intrafamily physical violence as its primary focus.

The longer list of physical violence items in the Figure 2 version of the CRT has been mentioned in some detail to point up the fact that it is not a necessary part of the instrument. If one wishes to use the CRT in the context of a study in which it is important to measure

TABLE 1. FACTOR ANALYSES OF CRT ITEMS

Role	Sample			
	VC	VVS	VVP	VA
Husband-to-Wife	x	x	x	x
Wife-to-Husband	x	x	x	x
Father-to-Child	x			x
Child-to-Father	x			x
Mother-to-Child	x			x
Child-to-Mother	x			x
Child-to-Sibling*	x			x
Sibling-to-Child	x			x

*"Child" refers to one randomly selected "referent child" per family.

TABLE 2. INTERNAL CONSISTENCY RELIABILITY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION INDEXES

Conflict Resolution Index	Item-Total Correlations (r)			
	Range		Mean	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Reasoning	.53 - .82	.52 - .78	.74	.70
Verbal Aggression	.47 - .85	.44 - .81	.73	.70
Violence	.79 - .91	.84 - .91	.87	.88

Reasoning with the same depth and reliability as Violence, then the Reasoning items cut from the original version (given in Figure 1) can be added.

FACTOR STRUCTURE OF THE CRT

The three conflict modalities which served as the basis for selecting the items to be included in the CRT, and which form the basis for the scoring described in a previous section, are theoretical constructs. But to what extent do the CRT items acutally group themselves into the three modalities? One method of providing empirical data on this issue is a factor analysis. To answer this question, 20 factor analyses will ultimately be computed, as shown in Table 1. The method used for

Table 1 about here

all these analyses is "Principal Factoring with Iteration" using a Varimax rotation as computed by SPSS option PA2 (Nie et al., 1975). The items included for the VC and VV samples are those given in Figure 1; (for the VA sample, to be added when available, the items are given in Figure 2.)

Husband-To-Wife Data. The results of this factor analysis correspond fairly closely with the theoretical grouping of the items explained previously. Specifically, the factor analyses of the VV sample (N = 89) and the VC sample (N = 385) both produced three factors, each of which identifies one of the three CRT scales.

Factor I clearly corresponds to the Violence scale. For the VV sample it has loadings of .8 or .9 on items J to M, and .62 on item N. For the VC sample, the results are almost identical, except that loading for item J is slightly lower (.74) and that for item N is slightly higher (.78) than the corresponding items loadings in the VC sample.

In both the VV and the VC samples, a seeming anomaly turns up with item I, "Threw something (but not at the other person) or smashing something." This item is scored with the Verbal Aggression scale, but it has a high loading on Factor I, which corresponds to the Violence scale (VV = .75, VC = .71). For the VC sample, item D--Brought in someone else to help settle things--also has a high loading on the Violence factor (.71).

The fact that items I and D have high loadings on the Violence factor, does not necessarily indicate that anything is wrong with restricting scoring of the Violence index to items which are overt acts of physical aggression. But at the same time, the reason for these loadings needs to be understood. One possibility is that item J falls in with the direct physical attack factor because smashing or throwing something in anger, even though not directed at the other person, forms a part of the escalation of the aggressive exchange which ultimately does lead to a direct physical attack.

As for item D, it may have a high loading on the Violence factor because, given the privacy norms of the contemporary American nuclear family, it takes a conflict involving physical violence to make the partners desparate enough to be willing to (or be forced to) breach this privacy by bringing in an outsider to help mediate the conflict.

Factor II is clearly the "reasoning" scale, with loadings on the first four variables of .96, .90, .46, and .26 for the VV sample and .83, .81, .60, and .35 for the VC sample. Further, the items in the Violence and the Verbal Aggression scales tend to have low negative loadings.

Factor III is equally clearly made up of the Verbal Aggression scale items. Items E through H have loadings ranging from .59 to .69, and even item I (which, it will be remembered, has a high loading on Factor I) has a loading of .28 on this factor in the VV sample. The results for

the VC sample are almost identical except that the loadings are somewhat higher.

The factor analyses of the husband-to-wife data for the two samples for which the data has so far been run, therefore suggests that although two items not conceptually a part of the Violence scale are correlated with the Violence factor, the a priori theoretical structure of the CRT is strongly supported.

Wife-to-Husband Data. The factor analysis of this data produced four factors rather than the three postulated by the theoretical reasoning underlying the CRT. The first three factors are again clearly the three CRT modalities, and have factor loadings which are very similar to those described for the husband-to-wife factor analysis. (Tables giving the varimax rotated factor matrices are available in an appendix because they are too extensive to be included in an article length report.) 5/

But what about Factor IV? This factor is made up of the two most physically violent acts (Item M = .82, Item P = .74). The emergence of this factor suggests that for women there are two different patterns of marital violence. The first pattern (Factor I) corresponds to Factor I for the men: those who engage in less severe forms of violence such as pushing and shoving also tend to hit with their hands or with an object. Factor IV at first seems strange. It suggests that there are a group of women who do not engage in pushing, shoving, or threats of violence, but who nonetheless have hit their husbands. One possible explanation is that this represents a "self-defense" factor, and that this is also the reason it shows up only among the women. That is, although women much less often than men initiate physical attacks, a great many women respond in kind when they are attacked by their husband. It may be this receprocated or self-defensive violence which produces Factor IV for the women.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

At the time the presentation of this paper was scheduled it was expected that data would be available on a large and nationally representative sample of families. However, although the survey has been completed, the seemingly inevitable delays in the survey itself and in the coding and preliminary computer runs prevent being able to report that data. Therefore, this section of the paper must rely only on the pilot studies which have been carried out in preparation for the national survey. These pilot studies all use the version of the CRT presented in Figure 2.

Reliability. The internal consistency reliability of the CRT was investigated for a sample of 385 families (as described by one college age child from each family) by computing an "item analysis." Specifically the items making up each CRT scale were correlated with the score for that scale. These item-total correlations are given in Table 2. They

Table 2 about here

TABLE 3. CORRELATION OF SPOUSE REPORT CRT SCORES WITH STUDENT REPORT CRT SCORES

CRT Scale	Correlation (r) for: Husbands (N=57)	Wives (N=60)
Reasoning	.19	-.12
Verbal Aggression	.51	.43
Violence	.64	.33

TABLE 4. PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING ONE OR MORE ACTS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Source of Data	% Violent in Last Year Husbands	Wives
Spouses*	9.1	17.9
Students*	16.7	9.5
Students**	11.3	11.4

*From Bulcroft and Straus, 1975. Husband N=57, Wife N=60
**From Straus, 1974. N=385.

show that for that sample, and for that version, the indexes have an adequate level of internal consistency reliability.

Validity. It must be stated at the outset that there is no definitive evidence supporting the validity of the CRT scales. Neither, however, is there complete lack of evidence. First, there is some evidence of "concurrent validity" (Cronbach, 1970: 122; Straus, 1964: 365). This is from a study by Bulcroft and Straus (1975) in which the CRT was completed by students in two sociology courses. The students responded to the CRT for a referent period consisting of the last year they lived at home while in high school. They were asked to indicate, to the best of their knowledge, how often during that year their father and mother had done each of the 14 items in the CRT. Each student was also asked to fill in separate forms with the names and address of their parents so that a similar questionnaire could be sent to them. Participation was voluntary and students were assured that they would not be mentioned in the letter to the parents, and that as soon as the mailing was completed the names and addresses would be destroyed and all documents identified by a number only from then on. Of the 110 students present in these classes, 105 completed the questionnaire. Of the 168 questionnaires sent to the mothers and fathers (each was sent separately with its own return envelope) 121 or 72% returned the questionnaire. A comparison of parent reports with student reports in this study, and also with student reports from a previous study (Straus, 1974) is given in Table 3.

Table 3 about here

The correlations shown in Table 3 are difficult to interpret. First, the pattern is varied. The correlations are low for the Reasoning scale and high (relative to typical concurrent validity results for most social psychological tests and scales) for the Verbal Aggression and Violence scales. An analysis by Bulcroft and Straus (1975) suggests that the higher correlations for the two aggressive modes of conflict are due to such acts being more dramatic and emotionally charged and therefore better remembered. # Second, there is a tendency for the students to report somewhat more violence by husbands than the husbands themselves reported, but to report less violence by wives than the wives themselves reported, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 about here

One does not know which data (the student report or the reports of the spouses themselves) is more accurate since each has its own potential source of bias. # Finally, a different approach to measuring the degree of agreement between the self-reports of spouses and the reports of one of their children suggests that, overall, the data obtained tend to be in agreement. This technique is the D coefficient developed by Osgood and Suci (1952) to measure the extent to which two sets of data differ. The D statistic and other measures of profile similarity (Nunnally, 1962) take into account both the absolute difference between the data "profile" of the persons compared and also whether the profile has a similar shape. D coefficients were computed to compare the profile of the 14 CRT items for each parent-child pair. The CRT items were first standardized by transforming them to PZ scores (Straus, 1976). To obtain a standardized measure of profile similarity, the raw

D coefficients were expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible D coefficient. For the profile of CRT items describing the husband as reported by the husband and as reported by one of his children, the average D coefficient was only 20.7% of the maximum. For the CRT profiles of the wives the figure was almost identical (20.6%).

Fortunately, it is not necessary to evaluate the validity of the CRT scales solely on the basis of the data just presented. First. the Physical Aggression items have a degreee of face or content validity since they all describe acts of actual physical force being used by one family member on another. Second, the results of previous analyses using the CRT measure of violence may be taken as providing at least some evidence of "construct validity." For example, the results are in accord with certain previous empirical findings and theories, including: (1) A low negative correlation with SES (unpublished data). (2) High violence when the conjugal power structure is either extremely husband-dominant or especially if the family is extremely wife-dominant in power (Straus, 1973). (3) The finding that the lower a husband's economic and prestige resources relative to his wife, the greater his use of physical violence to maintain a dominant power position (Allen and Straus, 1975).

NORMS

Tables of normative data will be included in this section as soon as the data from the national survey are available. These will be age and sex specific. Normative data of this type is sometimes useful for research purposes. For example, a researcher could compare the results for the specific population she/he studied with these norms for the

population in general. In addition, norms could be useful in relation to marriage and family counseling since they would enable the counselor to know the extent to which the family is low or high on each of the three conflict modalities measured by the CRT.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the data recently gathered for a nationally representative sample of families remains to be included in a later revision of this paper, hopefully enough information has been presented to enable an evaluation of the potential of the CRT scales. Even without the actual statistics from the survey, it has demonstrated that data of this type can be obtained from a large sample (N = 2,143) containing within it families of diverse social class, residential, age, and ethnic origin.

The importance of the CRT measures stems from the assumption that conflict is an inevitable part of all human association, including the family. A key factor differentiating what the public and many professionals regard as "high conflict families" is not the existence of conflict per se, but rather inadequate or unsatisfactory modes of managing and resolving the conflicts which are inherent in the family. Therefore, research and professional services concerned with intrafamily conflict requires techniques for measuring the way in which families attempt to deal with conflicts. The CRT is a step in this direction. It is hoped that the availability of this technique will encourage empirical research on one of the most central, yet neglected, aspects of the family.

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FOOTNOTES

*The work reported in this paper is part of the Family Violence Research Program at the University of New Hampshire. A program bibliography listing available reprints may be obtained on request. The work has been supported by a number of NIMH grants since its inception in 1970, and most recently MH13050 and MH27557.

The first draft of the measure described in this paper was developed in my seminar on intrafamily violence at the University of New Hampshire in 1971 and has been continuously aided since then by the work of students (both undergraduate and graduate) in subsequent seminars on this topic in 1972 and 1974. The work of Richard Bulcroft was particularly important. I would also like to express appreciation to Richard Gelles of the University of Rhode Island, and to for comments and criticisms which aided in the revision of this paper.

1. In the first published data using these scales (Straus, 1974), the Reasoning scale was called "Intellectualization." This was because that article was, in part, a criticism of certain anti-intellectual tendencies of the "encounter group" movement. I wanted to show that opposing the intellect and the affect is a false dichotomy, and that the use of the intellect in family disputes is associated with a low level of physical violence (which is what the findings indicated). However, among therapists, "intellectualization" also has another meaning: a mechanism for avoiding dealing with a problem, of hiding behind intellectual issues. That use of intellectualization is almost exactly the opposite of what was intended! Instead of avoiding

the issue, my use of "intellectualization" was meant to signify an active and assertive, but also a "civil" and non-aggressive (in the sense of non-malevolent) approach to conflicts in the family. For obvious reasons then, "intellectualization" is not a satisfactory way of designating the first of the CRT scales, and "reasoning" was substituted even though it also has certain problems. The main problem is that it does not adequately denote the active, problem-solving, getting-the-issues-on-table-for-discussion, aspect of things which is so crucial for conflict management.

2. The concept of "aggression" is beset by even more conceptual confusion that is conflict. Space does not permit the kind of explication given in Gelles and Straus (1977). However, it is necessary to at least state the way the concept is used here: An act carried out with the intention of, or perceived as having the intention of, hurting another person. The injury can be either symbolic or physical.

3. The revision was based on pre-tests for the national survey by Response Analysis Corporation, Princeton, New Jersey, with the collaboration of Herbert Abelson, Richard Gelles, Susan Steinmetz and Susan Weisbrod.

4. There may also be situations in which it might be desirable to weight the items in accordance with factor loadings or factor scores. However, a recent methodological study of weighting and other

aspects of index construction (Straus and Kumagai, 1976) suggests that little or nothing is likely to be gained by such weighting. Since the CRT items were selected to represent acts of increasing degrees of coerciveness, Guttman scaling is also an appropriate technique to apply to the CRT. This will be done, but purely as a means of determining the extent to which the items form a single hierarchical order. Guttman scale scores will not be computed because the required dichotomization of the items results in an unnecessary loss of measurement precision (Straus and Kumagai, 1976).

5. The supplimentary tables may be obtained by ordering document number and remitting $ for microfiche and $ for photocopies to National Auxiliary Publications Service.

University of New Hampshire
Department of Sociology

September 1976

FAMILY VIOLENCE RESEARCH PROGRAM

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THE SOCIAL CAUSES OF HUSBAND-WIFE VIOLENCE

Murray A. Straus and Gerald T. Hotaling, Editors
University of New Hampshire

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Part II. Cultural Norms and Family Violence

2. "The Marriage Licence as a Hitting Licence: Evidence from Popular Culture, Law, and Social Science" by Murray A. Straus

3. "Violence in American Society as Reflected in Children's Books from 1850 to 1970" by Martha D. Huggins and Murray A. Straus

4. "A Cultural Consistency Theory of Family Violence in Mexican-American and Jewish-American Subcultures" by Joseph C. Carroll

Part III. Social Organization and Interaction

5. "Sexual Inequality and Wife Beating" by Murray A. Straus

6. "Toward a General Stress Theory of Intrafamily Violence" by Keith M. Farrington

7. "The Paradoxical Nature of Family Relationships and Strategies of Conflict Resolution" by Joyce E. Foss.

8. "Facilitating Violence: Why Intimates Attribute Aggression" by Gerald T. Hotaling.

Part IV. The Interplay of Culture and Social Organization

9. "Wife-Employment, Marital Equality, and Husband-Wife Violence" by Bruce W. Brown

10. "And We Haven't Had Any Problems Since" by Ralph LaRossa

11. "Resources, Power, and Husband-Wife Violence" by Craig M. Allen and Murray A. Straus

V. Projects

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN AMERICAN FAMILIES (with Gelles and Steinmetz)

The family appears to be a group in which both intimacy and also aggression and violence are more prevalent than in any other group in our society. However, although the high frequency of aggression (both verbal and physical) between family members is strongly suggested by the available data, there has not yet been a single investigation of intrafamily aggression using a representative sample. A national sample survey was carried out (N=2,500) to obtain basic descriptive data and to test certain theories concerning the causes of intrafamily violence. Specifically, the study aims to provide information on the following questions: (1) How frequently is physical violence used between family members? Data were gathered on violence in parent-child relations, sibling-sibling relations and wife-husband relations, but the study emphasizes husband-wife violence. Husband-wife violence has been particularly neglected, yet we feel it is crucial for understanding other manifestations of intrafamily violence, including child abuse. (2) What is the subjective meaning of acts of physical violence between family members and to what extent are different types of violent acts normatively approved or disapproved? Previous research indicates the existence of a dual and conflicting value system with respect to intrafamily violence which needs to be clarified. (3) To what extent are certain sociological theories of the causes of violence--resource theory, conflict theory, and structural theory--applicable to the case of intrafamily violence? In addition to detailed analysis of these three theories, exploratory analyses will be done on a variety of possible correlates of family violence such as alcohol use, selected attitude andpersonality characteristics, and the degree of social isolation versus integration of the family with a network of relatives and friends.

FAMILY RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION IN A COMPUTER-GAME (with Loren Cobb)

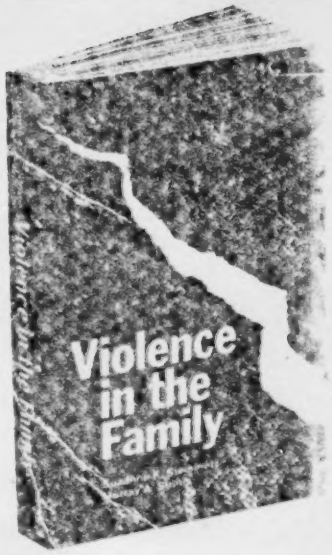
The research has both methodological and substantive aspects. The methodological aspect consists of developing a computer controlled modification of the Greenblat, Stein and Washburn (1973) MARRIAGE GAME for research use, and possibly also as a diagnostic tool for marriage and family therapy. The substantive aspect consists of an experiment in which the effects of economic deprivation on husband-wife relationships will be studied, including husband-wife conflict and aggression.

The MARRIAGE GAME is a simulation of marital interaction designed to teach certain principles underlying husband-wife interaction, especially those based on exchange theory. The game starts by obtaining from each spouse a measure of the extent to which each of the following goals or values in marriage is valued: security, esteem, leisure, freedom, sex gratification, marriage and parenthood, and ego support. In the research version of the game these scores will be used for two purposes: first as a means of evaluating performance in the game as measured by each subjectsability to maximize his/her value hierarchy. Second, as a means of measuring the congruence between husband and wife in respect to values.

The basic MARRIAGE GAME is now operating on the DEC-10 computer at the University of New Hampshire. The next steps are to develop various modifications of the basic game for purposes of exploring specific aspects of husband-wife interaction, such as aggression. In addition, as funds permit, a version of the game will be developed in which individuals interact with the computer simulating the behavior of a spouse.

A COMPUTER-GAME SIMULATION OF PARENT INTERACTION TO EXPLORE THEORIES OF CHILD ABUSE

This project is still at the "gleam in the eye" stage. If carried out, I plan to construct a computer-game (such as STARTRECK) in which the parents who participate in the research would "play against the computer" to see how effective a parent they are. A theme in certain studies of child abuse, for example, is that abusing parents have unrealistically high expectations for their children in respect to the child's instrumental and also affection-giving ability, and that these parents tend to use harsh verbal and physical punishment to get the child to perform. In addition, they are reported to typically be parents who themselves cannot provide affection for the child. However, the evidence for these and other similar theories is--to put it mildly--weak. The advantage of using a computer-game to test these theories are: (1) The actions of the "child" can be manipulated as an independent variable with precision and without ethical problem of using actual children and experimental deceptions. (2) Computer-games are highly engaging. The players get so cought up in the game that the experimental equivalent of a social desirability response set is minimized. A variety of studies can be carried out, including comparison of parents who are receiving assistance for child abuse with a random sample of parents. The game might also be used as a vehicle for teaching child-abusing parents how to deal with certain types of situations.



Edited by SUZANNE K. STEINMETZ, *Lincoln University, and* MURRAY A. STRAUS, *University of New Hampshire*

1974 **324 pages** **Paperback** **List Price $4.95**

Here for the first time is an interdisciplinary overview of all aspects of violence among family members. The 38 selections are chosen from a number of fields including sociology, law, anthropology, social work, and psychology. They dispel such myths about family violence as those relating to class or sex or the "catharsis myth." The editors, employing an introductory essay and headnotes, show that conflict may be a constructive part of both social organization and the family.

Typical Comments

"This book will be a milestone in the field of family sociology. It is badly needed and the job of bringing together relevant materials for a conflict model approach to the study of the family has been very well done."

—ELISE BOULDING, *Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Colorado*

"I feel that it is very useful to have a book that brings together materials representing the state of knowledge in this field and I feel, furthermore, that it may prove quite important in calling attention to the dearth of research on this topic with the consequences that it will be instrumental in fostering studies."

—ROBERT F. WINCH, *Professor of Sociology, Northwestern University*

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